Acorn

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NEWS LETTER

ARM 3 drives new UNIX products

Following the launch of the R140 some 18 months ago, Acorn recently announced two further UNIX products at the European Unix User Show in Olympia.

The R225 and R260 computer systems are the first Acorn computers to use Acorn's ARM 3 chip which enables both computers to run much faster than any other products in their class.

The 'secret' of the ARM 3 chip is a 'cache' which enables the most important elements of the computer's memory to be stored in the microprocessor itself rather than in the more remote hard disc memory.

As an example, a program designed for the master 128 can perform the specific calculations and draw a graph within 10 seconds. On the A400 series, the same graph could be completed within one or two seconds. Using one of the computers in the R200 series, the graph would appear instantaneously.

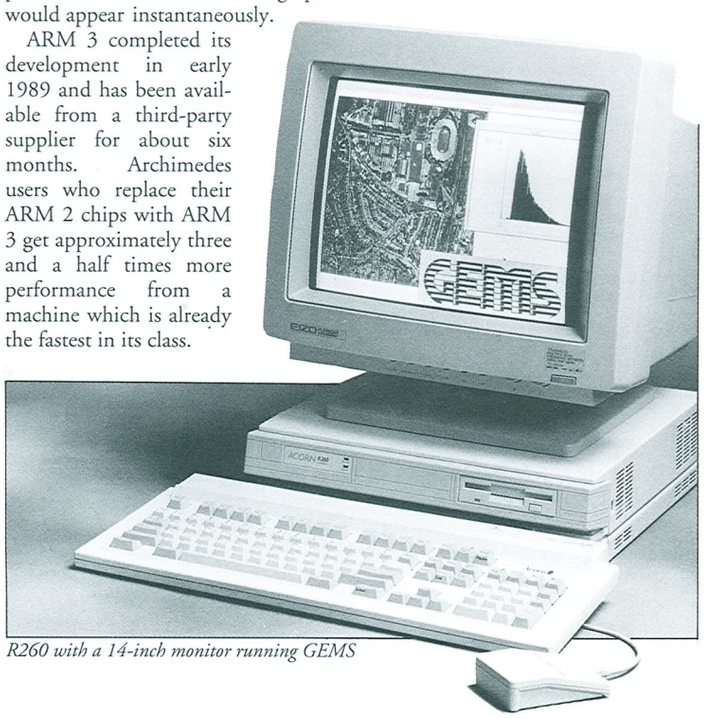
ARM 3 completed its development in early 1989 and has been available from a third-party supplier for about six months. Archimedes users who replace their ARM 2 chips with ARM 3 get approximately three and a half times more performance from a machine which is already the fastest in its class.

To begin with, Acorn will concentrate on selling the new R200 computers to universities and polytechnics. Tertiary education has been quick to recognise the value for money offered by the new series and twenty have already been sold to Newcastle University.

The new computers will also be used in the value added reseller sector for imaging, training and other solutions. According to David Slight, Product Manager, 'the machines compare very favourably with top PC clones like COMPAQ as well as with SUN workstations'.

The new series will be exhibited at various roadshows over the coming months and at the Open Systems Show in November.

A RISC OS version is currently under development, and when launched, will be the flagship of the Archimedes range.



R260 with a 14-inch monitor running GEMS

Acorn appoints new MDs

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Bob Moir as the new Managing Director of Acorn Computers Australia Pty. Limited. Bob joins us from Compaq Computer Australia where he held various senior sales and marketing positions. Prior to Compaq he was Managing Director of Alloy Computer Products' subsidiary in Australia and General Manager of Archives Computers Australia.

Bob emigrated to Australia from England in 1981 when he joined 3M in their Data Recording Products Division. He and his family have lived in Melbourne since their arrival.

Peter Revelle, from Acorn Computers New Zealand Limited becomes the new National Sales and Marketing Manager and Rainer Schroeder, Finance Manager, becomes Finance Director.

Doug Pauling, who features in our next issue, continues as Managing Director of Acorn Computers New Zealand Limited. Doug was educated in New Zealand and after college joined Telecom New Zealand and later Plessy. This was the start of his sales and marketing career which took him and his wife Raewyn to Hong Kong in 1969 where he was Sales Manager for Motorola Semiconductors Inc. His last appointment prior to starting Barson Computers in New Zealand was with Jardine Engineering based in Hong Kong. He describes himself as a 'retired rugby player and a keen skier'.

Bob Moir – MD Australia

Computer	Operating System	Micro-processor	Retail Price
R260	RISC iX	ARM 3	£3995
R225	RISC iX	ARM 3	£1995
R140	RISC iX	ARM 2	£1995
A540	RISC OS	ARM 3	£2995
A440/1	RISC OS	ARM 2	£1699
A420/1	RISC OS	ARM 2	£1299
A410/1	RISC OS	ARM 2	£1099
A3000	RISC OS	ARM 2	£599
MASTER 128	MOS	6502	£399

Wir sprechen Deutsch

During the summer, the International Department has had an especially continental flavour as German-born Heidrun Wenzel (Heidi to her colleagues) converses with German companies with whom we will be dealing in the future.

Heidi is currently studying for the German equivalent of a BA in Business Studies at Osnabruck. After 18 months in Germany, she spent six months at Buckinghamshire College of Further Education. She then has to spend six months in industry before returning to Germany for another 18 months' study before qualifying.

Initially, Heidi was a little reluctant to join Acorn as she did not consider herself a 'computer freak'. But, now she's settled in, she is enjoying her stay tremendously and finds Acorn's 'open door' policy and friendly management style very refreshing after working in a bank in Germany where the atmosphere was very formal.

'When I've qualified, I'd like to work in marketing in a medium-sized German company', says Heidi. 'I'm learning a great deal about the British style of business as well as developing my language skills, and apart from helping with the development of the German market I've also been able to assist with translations and correcting German software.'

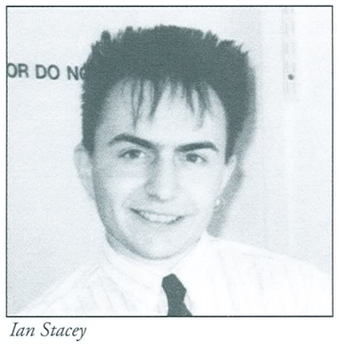
Heidi Wenzel

'Action man' reports on progress

'Since Sam relaunched Quality Action Desk at the Welding Institute', says Ian Stacey, 'there has been a steady stream of new quality problems reported. Over 20 new problems were reported in the first month and I still receive an average of ten new problems every month.

'It's my job to categorise the problems – manufacturing, specification, design, non-product or component failure – and to find someone who will take responsibility for sorting it out. It's their task not just to solve that particular problem but to make sure that other similar problems don't occur in the future.'

Most problems fall into the 'non-product' category; a great many are concerned with inefficient paperwork. One major problem, that was



Ian Stacey

successfully righted within a month, was brought to Ian's attention by Tony Sumner. Tony noticed that 'Genesis', which is packaged in with 'Learning Curve', contained some spelling mistakes. Sue Wall contacted the software house concerned and Charles White set about reviewing our process for auditing software produced by third parties to make sure this sort of problem doesn't occur again.

Ian aims to acknowledge receipt of problems within a day and assign responsibility for them within a couple of days. The person who takes responsibility agrees a completion date with the initiator of the problem. Many problems can be sorted out fairly quickly; others need longer investigation and take a long time to clear up, consequently Ian still has a few 'old chestnuts' on his desk. 'It's inevitable,' says Ian, 'but every problem has a solution; you just have to work a little harder to find it sometimes.'

Firm foundations built

Learning how to be firm yet positive was part of the recent Foundation Skills Course that Troy Akerman found the most interesting.

Troy deals with our dealers and distributors in connection with spares orders and goods returns authorisations. One of the most significant things she learnt on the course was how little one listens to what people are actually saying and having realised this and reinforced her communication skills, Troy believes she will be able to get even more out of her job.

Time management and basic finance were also key elements of the course which were covered by lectures, role plays, video presentations and discussions. Other delegates were Tom Rochford, Sue Doggett, Sarah Heywood, Susan Kelly, Sharon Hurrell, and Marian Caine.

Canada to have its own A3000

A special version of the A3000 has just been developed for the Canadian market. To help pave its way, Richard Sumner, International Market Development Manager, visited Toronto during the summer.

'All new international markets are tough nuts to crack', says Richard. 'Whereas Acorn technology is commonplace in educational establishments in the UK, most schools overseas already have MSDOS and it's very difficult to persuade them to change.'

However, there is now considerable potential for the A3000 in Canada as the adapted machine has GEMS (Grant Eligibility for Microcomputer Systems) approval, which means that schools wishing to purchase them will be given government grants.

Over the last 12 months our colleagues in Canada at Olivetti Office, who distribute our product there, have been working very hard and a number of Archimedes machines are now in use in selected test sites. 'We're concentrating our efforts on Toronto', explains Richard, 'because that's where Olivetti is based. It's easy to forget what a large market the Canadian one is, and it's important not to be too ambitious at first. There are more than 5000 schools, controlled by a large number of different boards, in Ontario alone. Assuming we do well in Toronto, then Quebec, and possibly British Columbia, are next on the list.'

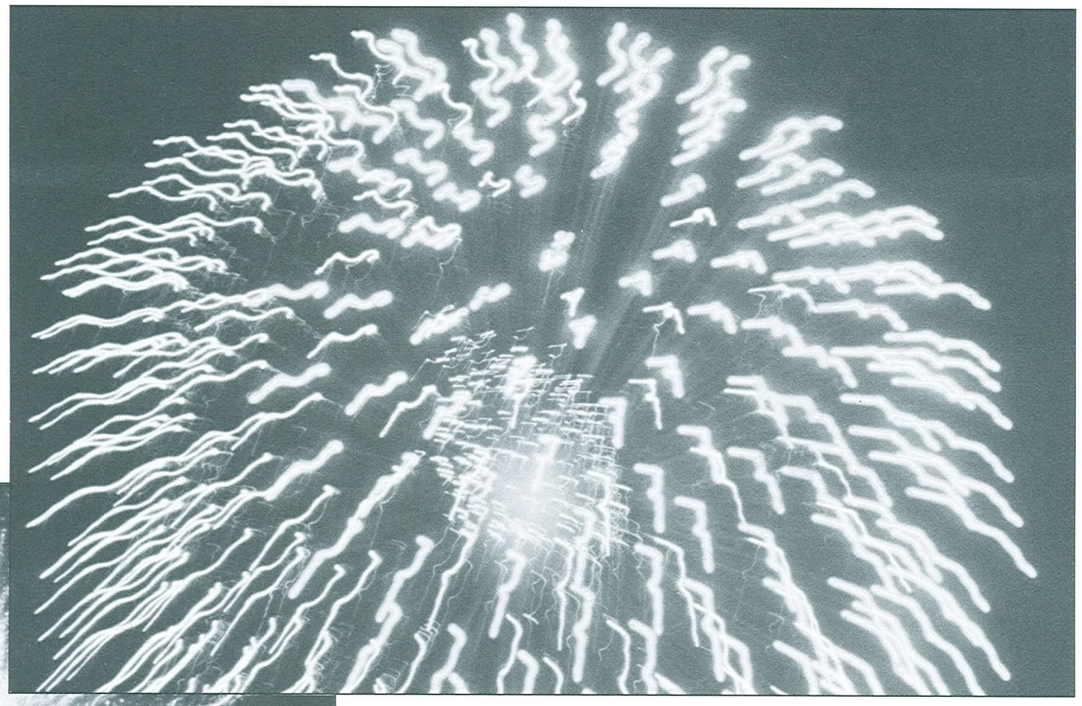
Already the University of Western Ontario, which acts as a centre of computing excellence in the area, has asked for machines to be installed in a special laboratory dedicated to Acorn equipment.

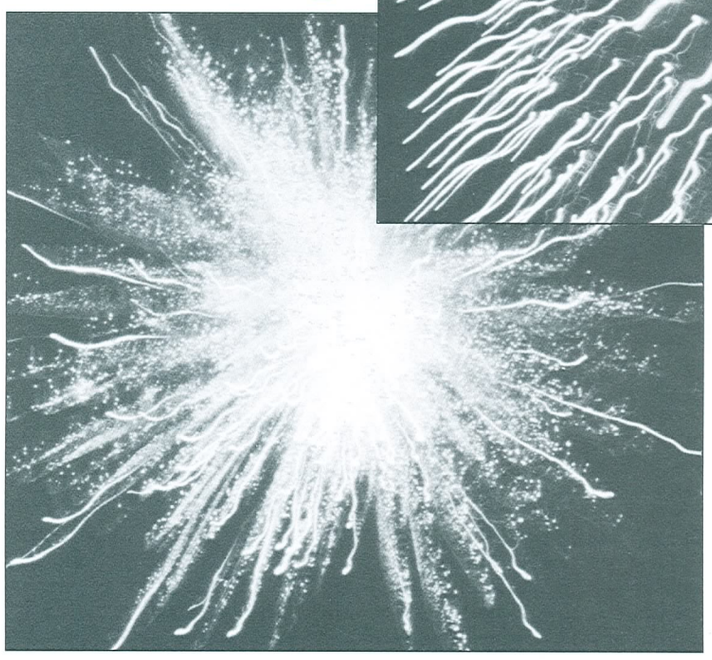
Acorn products destined for the Canadian market are imported by Olivetti Office and distributed and serviced by Comspec. A direct E-mail link has now been established between Acorn in the UK and Comspec to bring the two companies closer together. Joe Casale, Comspec's president, was said to be 'very pleased' with the speed at which technical queries could be answered.

Thousands watch Acorn fireworks

On a warm evening in July, Acorn's staff, families and friends met up to launch the Cambridge Festival with a spectacular firework display.

After feasting on barbecued treats, enjoying the live jazz duo and cooling down with suitable beverages, the children were led from the marquee to take up VIP positions in seats specially reserved for them at the front of the crowd, who had already assembled in their thousands in Parker's Piece. A cue from Michael Page and there followed a non-stop glittering display which lasted nearly 25 minutes, culminating in 'Thanks Acorn Computers' spelled out in fireworks.





Papworth packages learning curve

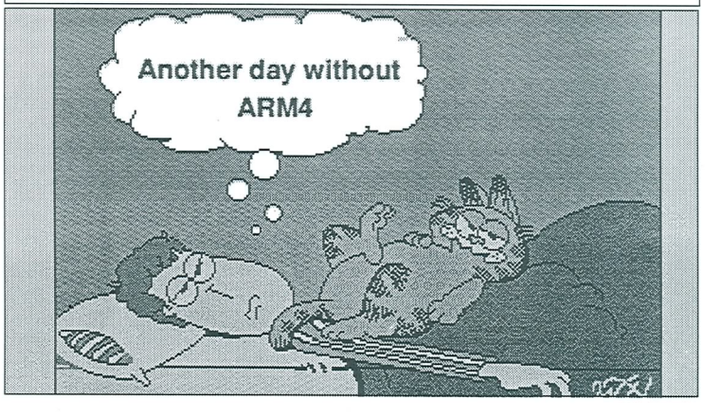
The Papworth Group has come a long way since its origins in 1917 when it was first established as a rehabilitation centre for tuberculosis victims. Today the Group offers sheltered accommodation and employment in a purpose-built environment for people with a wide range of disabilities.

Papworth employees carry out a wide range of work including furniture construction, vehicle body building, travel goods manufacture, printing and electronics assembly. Under a recently signed contract, the Papworth Group is currently in the process of assembling 6000 Acorn Learning Curve packages.

Commenting on the contract, Krys Boughey said: 'We are very pleased with Papworth's involvement. Acorn is very much involved with special needs and we plan to be giving even more support to this area during the 1990s.'

Cartoon winners!

Joint winners of the cartoon competition in the Summer edition were Martin Ley (top) and Roger Wilson (below), who will both receive a bottle of champagne.



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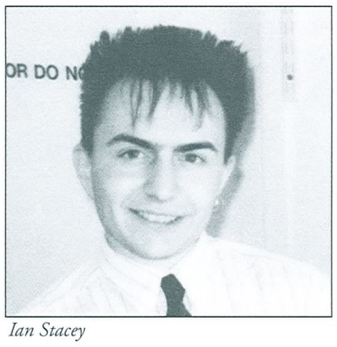

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